

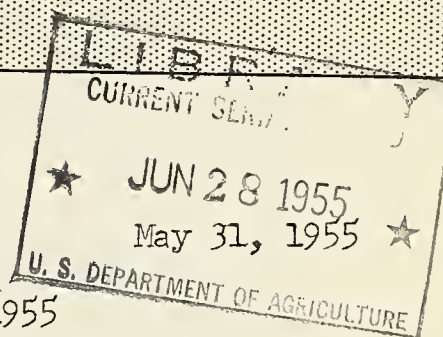
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FOREIGN AGRICULTURE CIRCULAR

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D. C.



FLM 5-55

WORLD SHEEP NUMBERS 1954 and 1955

World sheep numbers continued upward in 1954 for the eighth consecutive year. The total of 833 million head was 1 percent above a year earlier, 14 percent above prewar, and 18 percent above the 1946-50 average, on the basis of the latest information collected and analyzed by the Foreign Agricultural Service.

The greatest percentage increases in numbers during 1954 occurred in Africa, and smaller increases were registered for Asia, South America, and Oceania. Sheep numbers in the U.S.S.R. increased slightly from October 1953 to October 1954. There was little change in numbers in North America and Europe during 1954.

Compared with prewar, sheep numbers stand at unusually high levels in Africa, South America, Asia, and Oceania. However, numbers in North America are 36 percent below prewar and the total for Western Europe is down slightly.

SHEEP: Estimated world total, by continent or area,
averages 1936-40 and 1946-50, annual 1954 and 1955

Continent or area	Average		1954 1/	1955 1/	Increase (+) or Decrease (-)	
	1936-40	1946-50			1955	1955
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Percent	Percent
North America	59,700	42,800	38,800	38,700	-36	-
Europe	121,000	104,600	118,300	118,300	-2	-
U.S.S.R.	66,000	67,700	-	-	-	-
Asia	140,700	137,400	163,100	165,200	+18	+1
South America	100,900	117,500	125,900	126,600	+25	+1
Africa	99,700	98,300	123,500	125,400	+26	+2
Oceania	144,000	136,300	164,900	167,000	+16	+1
Total	732,000	704,600	824,500	833,200	+14	+1

1/ Preliminary.

A summary of this information was published in the May 9, 1955 issue of Foreign Crops and Markets.

SHEEP: Number in specified countries, averages 1936-40 and 1946-50, annual 1950-1955

Continent and Country	Month of Estimate	Averages					1953	1954 2/	1955 2/
		1936-40	1946-50	1950	1951	1952			
		Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
NORTH AMERICA									
Canada	Dec. 1 1/	2,651	1,681	1,259	1,268	1,016	1,105	1,161	1,184
Guatemala	July	273	665	712	-	-	-	-	-
Mexico	Dec. 31 1/	3/4/ 4,809	4,900	4/	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,200
United States	Jan. 1	51,404	34,993	29,826	30,635	32,088	31,861	31,218	30,931
Estimated total		59,700	42,800	37,300	38,200	39,600	39,300	38,800	38,700
EUROPE									
Austria	Dec. 31 1/	316	419	375	400	319	350	297	278
Belgium	Jan. 1	187	132	121	116	124	114	110	103
Denmark	July 15	147	93	61	56	48	39	33	-
Finland	June 15	1,007	1,071	1,220	1,096	1,126	998	908	-
France	Oct. 1 1/	9,648	7,257	7,480	7,511	7,585	7,674	7,826	7,985
Germany, Western	Dec. 1 1/	1,889	2,274	2,020	1,642	1,666	1,544	1,352	1,226
Greece	Dec. 31 1/	8,304	6,698	6,337	6,793	7,348	8,524	8,600	8,600
Iceland	Dec. 31 1/	624	462	402	416	411	443	-	-
Ireland	June	3,076	2,229	2,385	2,616	2,857	2,930	3,113	-
Italy	Jan. 1	9,650	9,624	10,366	10,295	10,141	10,002	9,892	9,500
Netherlands	May	636	459	390	360	383	424	407	-
Norway	June 20	1,742	1,716	1,812	1,929	1,987	1,985	1,952	-
Portugal	Dec. 31 1/	6/10/ 3,890	15,132	16,344	5,000	16,348	16,181	17,233	-
Spain 11/	April 1	393	368	279	261	256	241	234	-
Sweden	Summer	177	189	182	191	190	188	186	185
Switzerland	April	26,112	19,032	20,430	19,984	21,655	22,455	22,873	-
United Kingdom	June	9,920	10,845	10,042	10,273	10,518	11,400	12,112	-
Yugoslavia	Jan.	121,000	104,600	107,800	108,500	112,000	115,400	118,300	11,935
Estimated Total		94,300	83,300	85,100	85,400	88,100	90,800	92,900	118,300
Western Europe		26,700	21,300	22,700	23,100	23,900	24,600	25,400	26,100
Other Europe		66,000	67,700	78,000	86,000	90,000	92,000	-	-
U.S.S.R. (Europe and Asia)	Jan. 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ASIA									
Cyprus 12/	Oct.	300	302	287	295	311	351	361	-
Iran	Mar. 21	14,497	12,800	13,572	14,672	16,200	17,000	17,750	18,000
Iraq	Mar. 31	7,090	7,323	7,490	9,000	8,700	-	-	-
Syria 12/	Dec. 31 1/	2,060	2,963	2,443	3,250	3,232	3,400	-	-
Turkey	Dec. 31 1/	21,656	24,053	23,073	23,083	24,833	26,534	27,211	27,400
China 14/	May	14,100	9,400	10,000	10,800	14,400	17,200	-	-
India	Jan. 1	41,000	38,200	38,900	-	38,739	-	-	-
Indonesia	Dec. 31 1/	1,614	1,805	1,999	2,008	2,565	2,693	-	-
Pakistan	Jan. 1	8,000	6,150	-	-	8,000	-	-	-
Estimated Total		140,700	137,400	139,200	145,200	152,200	158,600	163,100	165,200

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina.....	July	5/	44,900	50,000	47,000	50,500	51,500	51,500	-
Bolivia.....	Dec. 31 1/	3/	2,608	4,000	-	-	-	-	-
Brazil.....	Dec. 31 1/	5/	11,438	14,413	-	14,251	15,891	16,264	17,000
Chile.....	June	5/	5,855	6,050	6,000	6,500	7,200	6,500	-
Colombia.....	Dec. 31 1/	5/	916	1,110	1,198	1,339	-	1,465	-
Falkland Islands.....			604	610	611	597	584	594	-
Paraguay.....	Dec. 31 1/	5/	159	254	202	216	200	-	-
Peru.....	May	3/	14,900	17,852	17,751	16,268	15,904	16,200	-
Uruguay.....	May	3/	17,931	21,600	23,000	23,409	27,000	28,500	-
Estimated total.....			100,900	117,500	115,500	118,800	125,400	125,900	126,600

AFRICA

Algeria 12/.....	April		6,180	3,486	4,531	5,321	6,028	6,014	-
Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.....		5/	2,500	5,375	5,600	6,000	-	-	-
Kenya.....		5/	3,274	3,260	-	3,400	-	-	-
Tanganyika.....	Dec. 31 1/	5/	1,780	2,263	2,304	2,445	2,339	2,515	-
Uganda.....	Mar. 31	5/	1,285	1,018	1,066	1,035	1,051	-	-
Basutoland.....	Feb.		1,443	1,630	1,558	1,564	-	1,300	-
Egypt.....	July 1	5/	1,771	1,943	1,932	1,944	1,959	1,864	-
Ethiopia (incl. Eritrea). Federation Nyasaland and Rhodesias.....			-	-	-	-	-	-	19,500
French Morocco 12/.....	Dec. 31 1/		399	393	375	354	373	394	-
French West Africa and Togo	Dec. 31 1/		9,976	7,939	9,149	10,375	10,960	13,262	13,900
Madagascar 12/.....	Dec. 31 1/	5/	8,674	9,000	9,700	-	-	10,800	-
Mozambique.....	Dec. 31 1/		193	171	204	244	284	365	-
North West Africa.....	Dec. 31 1/	5/	84	63	70	74	82	76	-
Spanish Morocco 12/.....			2,972	2,622	-	-	-	-	-
Tunisia 12/.....			481	593	684	-	-	-	-
Union of South Africa...	Dec. 31 1/		3,026	2,010	1,885	2,361	3,060	3,420	3,000
Estimated total.....	Aug.		39,899	31,542	31,261	34,823	35,480	35,992	-
			99,700	98,300	103,800	113,800	117,700	121,800	125,400

OCEANIA

Australia.....	Mar. 31	1/	112,571	103,261	112,891	115,596	117,647	123,072	126,890
New Zealand.....	Apr. 30		31,352	32,973	33,857	34,786	35,384	36,193	38,011
Estimated total.....			144,000	136,200	146,800	150,400	153,000	159,300	164,900
Estimated world total.			722,000	704,600	728,400	760,900	782,900	812,800	833,200

1/ End of year estimates (October to December) included under following year for comparisons and totals, times for Canada the December 1, 1949 estimate of 1,259,000 head is shown under 1950. 2/ Preliminary. 3/ Census or estimate for single year. 4/ June. 5/ Average for 2 to 4 years only. 6/ Official statistics; may be underestimates of actual numbers. 7/ September. 8/ March. 9/ Spring. 10/ Census, December 31, 1940. 11/ Sheep 1 year old and older. 12/ Data include only number taxed. 13/ A new series of estimates was inaugurated by the Directorate of Veterinary Service in 1951. 14/ 1950 figure includes 22 provinces, Manchuria and Sinkiang. Excludes outer Mongolia. Figures for 1951, 1952 and 1953 are National estimate of China mainland. Excludes outer Mongolia. 15/ Includes animals under one year old.

Compiled from official sources, reports of Agricultural Attaches and other United States representatives abroad. Data for countries having changed boundaries relate to present territory. Totals include estimates for countries for which official statistics are unavailable. Foreign Agricultural Service, April 1955.

Sheep numbers are not increasing as fast as they have been in recent years. The gain during 1954 was only 9 million head compared with 12 million a year earlier and 23 million the year before that. The sharp rise in world wool prices following the outbreak of the war in Korea in 1950 increased the interest in sheep production and brought about a sharp increase in numbers. The increases have continued despite the fact that world wool prices are now materially below the peaks reached in 1950-51. Apparently, returns from wool production in the important producing areas continue favorable to producers; and a relatively strong demand for lamb and mutton is also encouraging the expansion.

The high level of sheep numbers in Uruguay, Australia, and New Zealand suggests that wool production is continuing to rise and these countries will be able to maintain or increase their exports of lamb and mutton for several years. However, sheep numbers in the United Kingdom, the world's largest importer of lamb and mutton, are approaching prewar levels. The increase in numbers there since the end of World War II has tended to decrease the amount of lamb and mutton imported. Apparently sheep numbers continue to increase in the Union of South Africa, but that country has exported little lamb and mutton in recent years. During the past year and a half the U.S.S.R. has become a leading importer of lamb and mutton and has obtained large supplies of ewe and wether carcass mutton in Uruguay, Argentina, Australia, and New Zealand.

Sheep numbers in the United States continue at low levels. The January 1, 1955 inventory of 31 million head, except for 1950 and 1951, was the lowest of annual records, dating back to 1867. Numbers in Canada are also at relatively low levels. The December 1, 1954 number of 1,184,000 head was less than half the prewar average of 2,651,000. In both Canada and the United States sheep production has faced increased competition from cattle and dairy production and somewhat from relatively more profitable returns from crop production. The high cost of producing lambs and wool in relation to returns has not been favorable to the maintenance of sheep numbers.

Sheep numbers in Western Europe decreased slightly during 1955. Numbers continued to increase in France, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. They decreased in Austria, Belgium, Finland, West Germany, Italy, Spain, Yugoslavia and Switzerland. Numbers were about maintained in the Netherlands, Greece, Norway, Portugal, and Sweden. Western Europe has more than twice as many sheep as North America. The United Kingdom is the largest producer, Spain is the second largest, and Yugoslavia is the third largest.

It is believed that sheep numbers have continued to increase in Eastern Europe and that the total there is now about up to prewar. Bulgaria and Rumania are the largest producers in the area. It was reported that Bulgaria had 9.3 million sheep in prewar and Rumania had a moderately greater total. Sheep numbers in Eastern Germany are now reported to be above prewar.

Sheep numbers continue to increase in important producing countries in Asia. Numbers in Turkey, with the third largest inventory, are believed to be considerably above prewar and to have increased steadily in recent years. It is estimated that numbers in India, with the second largest sheep total in Asia, have been maintained or increased slightly during the past several years. Apparently numbers are also at high levels in Iran and Iraq. Numbers in China are reported to be considerably above prewar and more than double the low level of 1946-50, on the basis of reports from the Communist press and radio.

During the past few years there have been sharp increases in numbers of sheep in Uruguay, one of the leading sheep producers in South America, and numbers in Argentina, Brazil, and Peru have been maintained or increased slightly.

The estimated number in the Union of South Africa in August 1953 was almost 36 million head and it is believed that there has been an increase there since that time, despite the recent serious drought.

Sheep numbers in the leading producer of the world, Australia, apparently have established a new all-time high. Most indications point to an increase in sheep numbers in New Zealand and the number on farms this April was estimated to be greater than the 38 million head on hand in April 1954.

Sheep numbers in Australia reached a low point in their present cycle during 1947 when the number on farms March 31 was estimated at 95.7 million head. Since that time numbers have continued to increase each year until the inventory on March 31, 1954 totaled 126.9 million. Grazing conditions on April 1, in most areas of Australia, were considerably better than average. Heavy rains were received over much of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. Grazing conditions in the Northern Territory and in the remaining states were at least average. For the country as a whole, prospects looked good for a favorable winter grazing season.

Sheep production in New Zealand is expanding at a much faster rate than that of other classes of livestock. The grazing industry is expanding in two directions. One form of growth is the bringing into production of new lands. The other is increasing the productivity of land now being used through the use of fertilizer, drainage, reseeding, planting of new strains of grasses and legumes and better grazing practices and management. There has been a phenomenal growth in aerial top dressing of pastures over the past five years. During 1954 over 203,000 tons of inorganic fertilizers were spread on 1,929,000 acres of land by aircraft and the tonnage thus applied accounted for nearly a quarter of all fertilizer produced.

The number of breeding ewes on hand in New Zealand, June 30, 1954, was estimated to be 24.8 million compared with 24.2 million a year earlier. The productivity of sheep is unusually large because of the large number of lambs raised per breeding ewe. The number of lambs docked in the current season is estimated at 23.7 million, a slight increase over the 23.6 million docked in 1953-54. The estimated lambing percentage (lambs docked as a percentage of breeding ewes on hand) this season was 93.7 or several percent below a year earlier. During the past 5 years the number of lambs saved has increased by 5 million head.

This is one of a series of regularly scheduled reports on world agricultural production approved by the Foreign Agricultural Service Committee on Foreign Crops and Livestock Statistics. It is based in part upon reports of Agricultural Attaches and other U.S. representatives abroad.

